

# Davis Creek Reservoir

## Summary of the 2009 Fall Survey

Brad Newcomb, District Manager

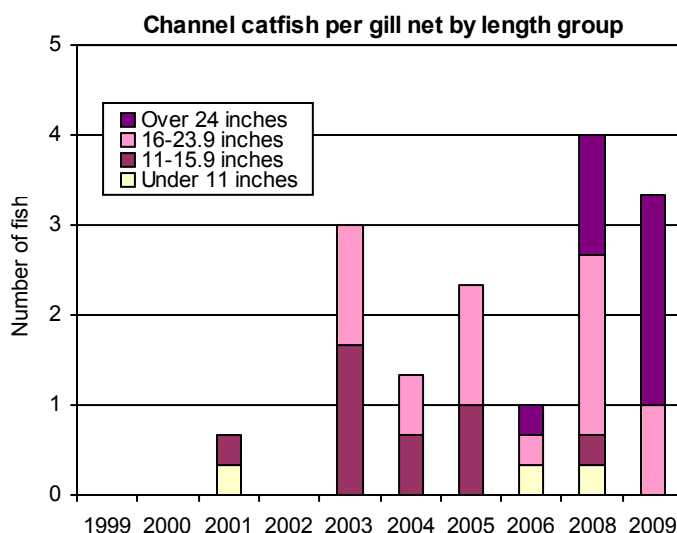


The following text and graphs are the result of netting surveys completed during September 2009 at Davis Creek Reservoir. For comparative purposes it also shows results from previous years. Fish populations are sampled each fall at Davis Creek using gill and frame nets. Gill nets are used to sample fish species found primarily in open water, such as walleye, while frame nets are used to sample shoreline oriented species, such as crappie. The nets are set each year at approximately the same locations and dates as previous years. This reduces variability and allows for trend comparisons of species abundance and size distribution. The following graphs show the total number of fish caught per net and the relative abundance of fish within several length categories. The text provides a brief explanation of the information shown in the graphs.

### Channel Catfish

Channel catfish numbers have generally increased since 1998. The majority of catfish sampled in 2009 were over 24 inches long. The largest catfish sampled in 2009 was 31 inches long, and about 30% of the catfish sampled were over 28 inches long.

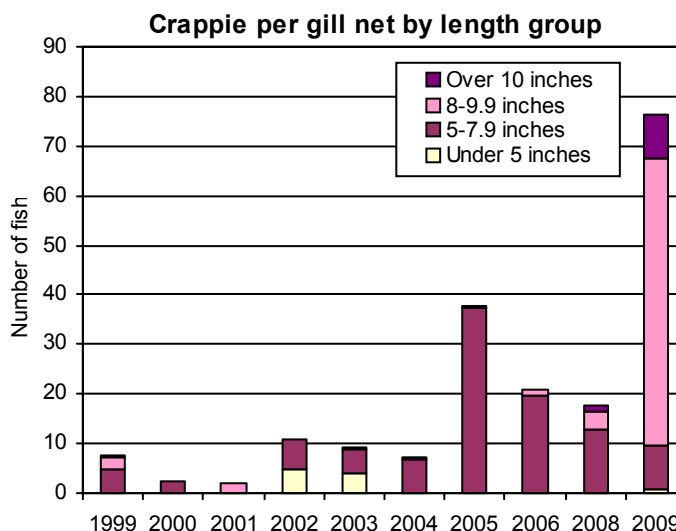
Catfish anglers should expect decent fishing in 2010 with large, trophy size catfish available at Davis Creek Reservoir.



### Crappie

Survey results presented for 2009 show fall frame net catch, which was much higher than previous years. Crappie frame net catch in 2009 included excellent numbers of crappie from 8 to 10 inches long. Most of the crappie from this size range were age two and three. There was also fair representation of crappie over 10 inches long that ranged from age six to nine.

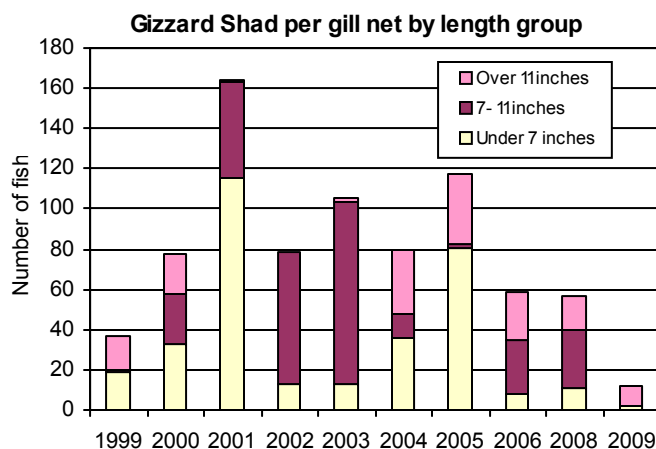
The current crappie population in Davis Creek Reservoir should provide very good fishing opportunities the next few years.



## Gizzard Shad

Gizzard shad numbers had been very high in the 2000-2008 surveys. However, shad numbers declined considerably in 2009. Only 12 shad per net were sampled in 2009, which is well below the average of about 80 per net from 2000-2008. Annual recruitment was very consistent from 2000-2008, but very low in 2009. The shad population sampled in 2009 consisted mostly of fish over 11 inches long.

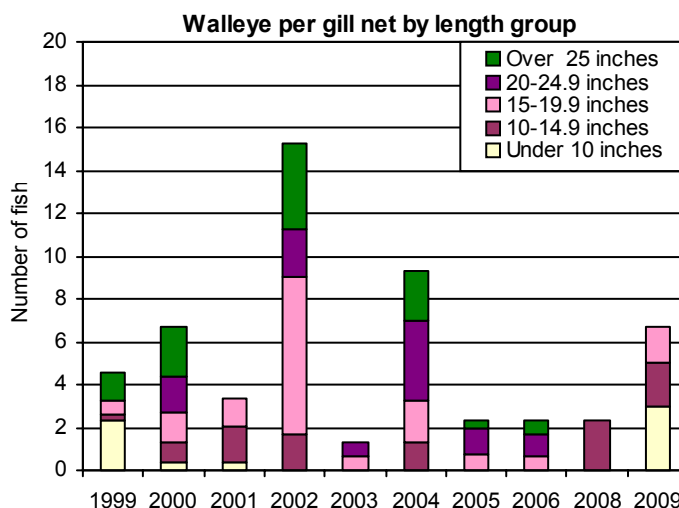
The consistent abundance of gizzard shad before 2009 indicated the ability to support more predator fish species in Davis Creek Reservoir. Walleye and wiper stockings were started in 2009 to utilize abundant gizzard shad and other prey species.



## Walleye

Walleye net catch increased in 2009, and was well above catch levels from 2005-2008. There was good abundance of walleye under 10 inches, which corresponded to walleye stocked in 2009. The 2007 year-class is still well represented, and those walleye ranged from 13 to 15 inches long. Earlier surveys had documented good numbers of walleye over 25 inches, but none were sampled in 2008 or 2009.

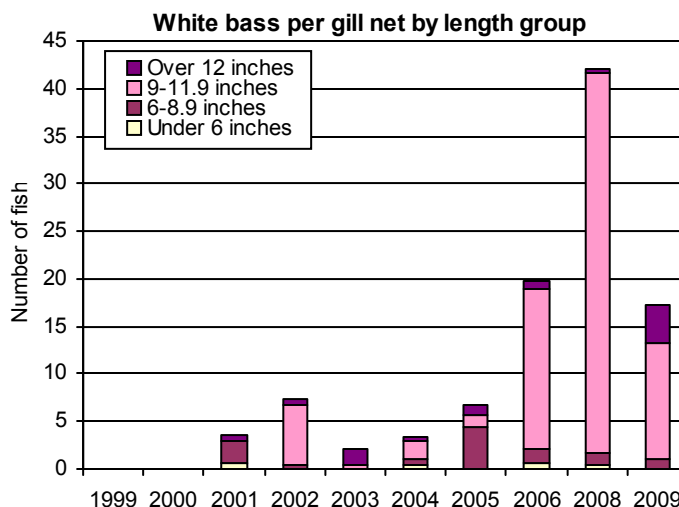
Low recruitment of walleye had been documented for most surveys at Davis Creek Reservoir. Walleye stocking in 2009 appears to have improved overall walleye numbers, and future stockings are planned to continue this trend.



## White Bass

Although not as high as the 2008 peak, white bass numbers in the 2009 were very good. The 2009 survey showed the best numbers of white bass over 12 inches long ever sampled at Davis Creek Reservoir. The 2007 year-class is providing most of the white bass population, with fish ranging from 11 to 12.5 inches long.

With the abundant 2007 year-class reaching quality size, white bass anglers should expect excellent fishing the next few years at Davis Creek Reservoir.



## Wipers

The first stocking of wipers was completed at Davis Creek Reservoir in 2009. Stocking success was documented with one wiper per net sampled in the fall gill net survey. Wipers ranged from six to seven inches long. Wipers were stocked in 2009 to utilize abundant prey available in Davis Creek Reservoir. Future stockings will continue dependent on prey availability.

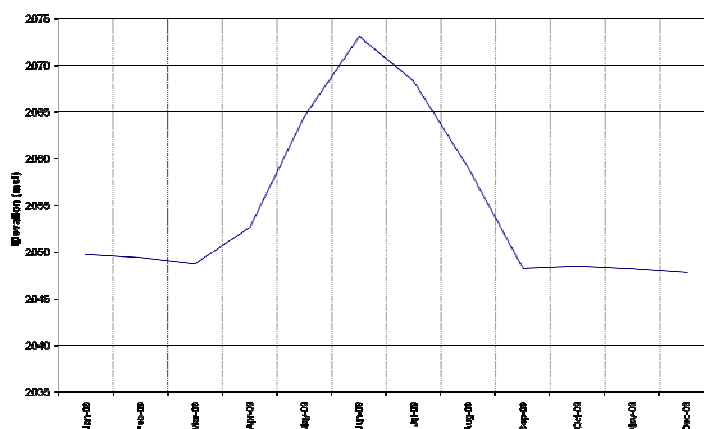
Wipers grow rapidly in most Nebraska reservoirs, and anglers should expect to catch fish around 12 inches long in 2010.

## Additional Information about Davis Creek Reservoir

The 2009 netting survey at Davis Creek Reservoir indicated good survival from predator fish stockings of walleye and wipers. High numbers of gizzard shad, common carp, carpsuckers, and freshwater drum prompted stocking of additional predators. Walleye and wiper stockings will continue in future years to utilize abundant prey species present in the reservoir.

Typical of irrigation reservoirs in Nebraska, fluctuating water levels have a large impact on available aquatic habitat at Davis Creek Reservoir. Shoreline habitat is best when the reservoir is near conservation pool and reduced when the reservoir is low in the fall and winter. The addition of deep water habitat structures may improve winter survival of shoreline-oriented fish species such as crappie. Current lake elevations can be found on the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation website: [http://www.usbr.gov/gp-bin/arcweb\\_dane.pl](http://www.usbr.gov/gp-bin/arcweb_dane.pl)

**Davis Creek Reservoir End-of-Month Elevations in 2009**



Reorganization of district boundaries in 2008 transferred fisheries management responsibility of Davis Creek Reservoir to the Kearney District Office. Staff from the Kearney District Office completed the 2008 and 2009 netting surveys, and will be responsible for future surveys and management recommendations such as fish stocking and fishing regulations. Please contact the office listed below with any questions concerning fisheries management at Davis Creek Reservoir.

For additional information about fisheries management at Davis Creek Reservoir, please contact the NGPC Kearney office at 308-865-5310, or by email at the addresses listed below.

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